

News story: New Defra Chief Scientist appointed

Professor Gideon Henderson has been appointed the new Defra CSA

UN Human Rights Council 41: introductory statement on Syria

Thank you Mr President,

The UK has to the honour to present draft resolution L.25 on the human rights situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, on behalf of a group of states: France, Germany, Italy, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, the Netherlands, Qatar, Turkey and the United Kingdom.

Mr President,

It is with deep regret that we are again compelled to present a resolution on the human rights situation in Syria. But the grave human rights situation continues to demand a response by this Council.

This draft resolution reflects recent developments on the ground, which must be of concern to us all, including the ongoing crisis as a result of military action in Idlib. Since April, shelling and air strikes have resulted in 350 deaths and the displacement of over 300,000 people. These are violations causing suffering on a massive scale.

It is simply unjustifiable that 25 health facilities and 45 schools are reported to have been damaged due to airstrikes. And, in some cases these airstrikes took place despite the facilities sharing their coordinates with the UN deconfliction mechanism. As a result of these attacks, 49 health facilities have stopped or suspended all services, leaving the 3 million civilians in Idlib even more vulnerable.

The resolution also reflects the latest findings of the UN Commission of Inquiry on Syria, and includes new language expressing concern regarding the use of landmines by all parties to the conflict and on the need for all parties to search for missing persons in line with UN Security Council Resolution 2474, led by Kuwait. The resolution also reflects recent developments in OPCW investigations into the use of chemical weapons.

The negotiation process for this resolution has been open and transparent, and we have reflected many of the key concerns raised by states during the

informal negotiation process. Once again we would like to thank member states for their constructive participation.

Mr President,

This text should be adopted without a vote being called. As we have said before, this resolution should enjoy the support of all at this Council. We urge all member states to put the plight of the Syrian people first, to support the UN-led political process under the auspices of the Special Envoy of the Secretary General, and adopt this text by consensus.

In the event we must have a vote on this text, we urge all delegations to vote in favour of the text as drafted.

Thank you, Mr President.

17,000 more fish released into Lincolnshire's River Witham

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Another 17,000 fish have been reintroduced into Lincolnshire's River Witham by [Environment Agency](#) teams as part of ongoing efforts to help the river recover from last year's devastating pollution.

It brings the grand total of fish restocked into the river to 91,000 so far, plus around 1.5 million larvae.

The restocking will help restore the river to its natural, healthy state, after a serious pollution in March 2018, when ammonia badly affected the river and its ecosystems from Bardney to the Wash. More than 100,000 fish were killed in what's thought to be the worst river pollution ever recorded in the county.

The [last round of restocking](#) took place in May, when 34,000 roach and bream were placed back into the river.

All the fish were bred at the Environment Agency's national coarse fish farm in Calverton, Nottinghamshire, before being transported and released into the river by fisheries officers.

Darren Randall, fisheries officer at the Environment Agency, said:

Last year's pollution had a devastating impact on the Witham and its wildlife, but we're doing all we can to help return it to its former glory.

A river can take years or even decades to recover from such a serious pollution, but reintroducing these fish will help restore its complex ecosystems and natural balance. It's just one way we're working to protect and improve the environment, for people and nature.

Strong, healthy fish and larvae from Calverton play an important role in the work of the Environment Agency to restore sustainable fisheries – they replace stocks lost to pollution, improve stocks where natural reproduction is low, and help create fisheries in areas where there is a shortage of angling opportunities.

All the fish farm's work is funded by income from fishing licence fees – you can find out more about fishing licences, including how to buy one, on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

Anyone who suspects a pollution incident is urged to report it to the Environment Agency's incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60.

[The Pesticides \(Amendment\) \(EU Exit\) Regulations 2019](#)

This instrument makes a number of amendments to the retained direct EU legislation which forms the plant protection product and maximum residue level ('MRLs') regulatory regimes, so that they can continue to operate effectively after the United Kingdom leaves the European Union. Some of the required amendments are as a consequence of the change in "exit day" from 29th March which impacts on various dates specified in the retained law. Further new EU legislation has also come into force during the extension period, which needs to be amended in order to correct deficiencies arising from exiting the European Union. This instrument also fixes a number of errors in earlier instruments made under section 8(1) of the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 ('the Withdrawal Act').